

EDITORIAL

COULD WE MAKE THIS A SUMMER FALLOW YEAR? At the November Board Meeting the Secretary said: "I feel like a bird of ill-omen. For the second year in succession I have had to report to you a decrease in membership—of 2039." And it was suggested that it might be advisable to set up a committee to find the cause of this falling off in membership.

One possible cause was mentioned over and over again in this year's Reports of Meetings. Secretaries wrote that because of so many appeals for money and so much business to attend to at meetings, there is little time left for either program or sociability, so women are losing interest in the Institute. Old members are dropping out and it is impossible to attract new ones.

Is it possible that we are getting into so much big business that we're neglecting the warm, vital, personal interests that caught the imagination of women fifty-eight years ago and set the Institute movement rolling across the province like a prairie fire?

Surely the time is here to do something about this. The Provincial President has announced that there will be no provincial fund-raising project this year. An increasing number of officers are learning that they cannot ask women with other demands on their time and resources to contribute to every cause that asks for help. And not a few thinking women are realizing that if we believe our organization, with its objectives of better homes and better communities, has something unique and important to offer women, it is time to farm back into it some of the things we have been losing.

Could we make this a summer fallow year? Just as a farmer sometimes rests his land from heavy cropping and tills back into it the vegetation it needs to nourish the soil, could we give ourselves a rest from the business that drives us and turn our attention to enriching our Institute life? This would mean good programs with the members studying and discussing together things vital to women, especially to young mothers in the busiest years of their family life — homekeeping and family relationships and how to make the community a better, happier place; how to enjoy cultural interests and bring them into our homes. It might mean more singing at our meetings, more entertainment so that our members go home refreshed and heartened for the responsibilities they carry.

Because we will always need something in our treasury, if only to be ready to send a gift to a new baby or a family in trouble or the old people in the County Home, could we take such enjoyable and incidentally educational ways of raising funds as getting our men and our young people to help us put on a play or a variety concert? In brief, could we take the next twelve months to build into our Institutes the soundness and the spirit ready for great educational ventures in the years ahead? Could we make this a summer fallow year?

Ethel Chapman